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Book reviews

Forensic & Medico-Legal Aspects of Sexual Crimes and Unusual Sexual Practices, Anil Aggrawal. CRC Press (2008). 424 pages, \$99.95, ISBN-10: 1420043080; ISBN-13: 978-1420043082

This is a useful source book which describes a wide spectrum of sexual practices and differentiates between those which are illegal (with helpful comparisons between national jurisdictions and legal codes), those which may escalate to that category and those that merely push the boundaries of what any particular society or time would deem “normal”. There are illustrative case studies and descriptions of relevant ICD 10 and DSM 4 classifications.

Most of the sexual practices which have the potential, at least, to conflict with the law, are then classified, showing the progression for frotteurs, for example, from class I: fantasising about the behaviour, II: consensual activity, III: romantic frotteurs who carry out the illegal activity but can also form normal sexual relationships, IV: the fearless frotteur who is willing to forfeit his anonymity for increased physical contact and V: excusive, the last of whom cannot form a normal sexual relationship – frotteurism is his sole outlet for sexual gratification. Such progressions are demonstrated for fetishists, graded from desirers up to fetishistic murderers, for whom this has become an obligatory activity to achieve arousal.

An incredible number (547) of fetishes are listed, many of which I have never encountered, in the course of my work as a psychosexual therapist; for example, anolingus – arousal from licking lizards or homophilia – arousal from hearing or giving sermons. Pantophilia – arousal from just about everything imaginable – seems to sum up human inventiveness when it comes to sexual gratification.

This work explores theories of aetiology, from biological theories and courtship disorder theory to John Money's Lovemaps and operant conditioning. The complexity of human sexuality is recognised: sex (male/female/inter biological sex), gender (male/female/trans/3rd gender) and orientation (homo/hetero/bi/auto/a – sexual).

There is often little that can be offered in the way of objective assessment in cases of alleged sexual offences: penile plethysmography and polygraph testing have limited scope and possible treatment options such as hormones, SSRI antidepressants and lithium are similarly restricted in their application. It is also claimed that penile phallometry (measurement of penile response to visual imagery of consensual intercourse and rape) can produce a rape index which can distinguish potential rapists from non-rapists. Even if true, its practical application seems limited.

Sexual addiction is not, in itself criminal, although it may become so when it involves child pornography sites. Paraphilias represent a situation where the sexual stimulus is in some way deviant (shoe, child, corpse) whereas in sexually addictive or compulsive behaviour, the stimulus is socially acceptable but the sexual drive is excessive and impulse control poor. As a therapist, this is an area of increasing concern and requests for help, as the Internet has both facilitated access and encouraged progression, with the secrecy and re-enforcing nature of the contact. This area is touched on but not explored in any depth.

Paedophilia and its aetiology is explored, mainly considering biological and neuro-developmental theories with little exploration of psychological and sociological factors; this chapter is perhaps more limited in scope than many of the other topics explored.

As a sexual offences examiner, I found the chapter on rape addressed the issues of legal definition, forensic examination and aftercare; while there may be slight differences in our current examination of complainants in the UK (e.g. use of lubricant), the chapter gives a very useful overview. It also explored the issue of consent and when there may be sufficient coercive pressure to undermine the legitimacy of consent; consent, while necessary, may not be sufficient to make a sexual practice legal as in *R v Brown* where consent to sadistic practices did not invalidate the activity as an assault. Rape represents an inherently legal activity, made illegal by lack of consent, and the difficulties this poses in the context of criminal law is highlighted.

The historical progression from 1781 on the issue of how much penetration is required to constitute rape and the recognition in 1841 that an examination finding of *virgo intacta* does not preclude the offence of rape, is of interest. The chapter also looks at international differences in statutes concerned with sexual assault. The statement however, that ‘rape of men, whether by women or other men, is not a highly problematic issue’ is hard to justify.

In conclusion, *Forensic & Medico-Legal Aspects of Sexual Crimes and Unusual Sexual Practices* makes interesting reading, especially in its wide ranging exploration of paraphilias and may be a useful reference for those working in the field of both sexual offences and psychosexual therapy.

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Sexual assault – a forensic clinician's practice guide 2010, White C. ISBN: 978-0-9564737-0-7

The author states that the aim of this book is to provide a practical guide for clinicians dealing with sexual assault cases with easily accessible information so that this book can be used during the examination process. This aim is definitely achieved but this book is so much more!

Dr Catherine White is currently the Clinical Director of the St Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in Manchester, UK. This was the first SARC in the UK and is still setting the gold standard for other SARCs to aim for.

The book is a high quality loose leafed folder so that updates or local policies and procedures can easily be added. The text is beautifully laid out with tables and appropriate illustrations and to further support the text there are illustrative case studies, key practice points, essential references, and ideas for further reading. There is a section for useful numbers at the back of the book with space for the clinician's personal area numbers. There are also a number of appendices which include examples of pro formas from St Mary's SARC and relevant Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine (FFLM) documentation.

There are twenty chapters covering such topics as the basic legislation with regard to sexual offences in the UK – this small section could easily be adapted for other jurisdictions internationally; how to deal with the initial request to attend a complainant of sexual assault; the initial assessment with comprehensive detail on capacity, consent and confidentiality; specific history taking in relation to sexual assault cases; and the examination including an excellent section on anatomy with illustrative line diagrams. Other relevant topics in this field such as emergency contraception, post-exposure prophylaxis, sexually transmitted infection, and the psychological effects of sexual assault are well covered.

The chapters on injuries, forensic samples, alcohol and drugs and in relation to writing statements and attending court will be hugely relevant to all forensic physicians not only those involved in sexual assault. The last chapter is entitled supporting clinicians and suggests support structures such as peer review, appraisals, training, mentorship, supervision, and regular team liaison meetings may result in better recruitment, retention and improved

clinical standards. These issues are important to all healthcare professionals working in forensic medicine.

I found the section on child examination very useful even though I am not involved in child sexual abuse examinations. This chapter contains vital information on parental responsibility and safeguarding issues. It is essential that all clinicians involved in the care of children are fully aware of recent developments in this field.

In summary this book is essential reading for all those clinicians involved in sexual assault work but it will also be of interest to other healthcare professionals working in the clinical forensic field. One knows when a true expert has written a book because their knowledge and experience ensure that the content is unambiguous and authoritative.

The author Dr Catherine White has been at the forefront of her field for some years now and it is clear she has a wealth of experience, has learnt from this experience, reflected and refined her practice, and is now using her knowledge, skills and attributes to educate forensic clinicians of the future – a true master in her field.

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